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ABSTRACT

Derived mainly from publications by the League of California Cities, this guide to social planning for small cities presents the following: (1) social planning definitions; (2) a checklist of social planning concerns (provision for: adequate income and economic opportunity; optimal environmental conditions for basic material needs; optimal health care; adequate knowledge and skills; optimal personal/social adjustment and development; adequately organized social instrumentalities); (3) Abraham Maslow's need hierarchy presented as an alternative checklist for social planning; (4) the effect of recent emphasis on local government accountability as reflected in the New Federalism legislation (General Revenue Sharing, Rural Development Act of 1972, and Housing and Community Development Act of 1974); (5) the increasing demand for social services by small city citizens; (6) strategies for initiating a social planning effort with limited resources (restricted procedures dealing with only one or two areas of concern; acquisition of resources from other agencies or groups; and cooperative planning programs); (7) common social planning procedures (collection of statistical data, use of professional advice, and use of community surveys); (8) brief profiles of the social planning efforts of three small cities (concerns, initiation, responsibility, program, cooperating groups, consequences, and advice). (JC)

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SOCIAL PLANNING FOR SMALL CITIES

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University of California, Davis

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SOCIAL PLANNING FOR SMALL CITIES

What is Social Planning?

Modern social planning had its genesis in the federal government's massive social services programs of the 1930's. Social security, public welfare, employment services, and a host of other social service programs were created as a part of the governmental response to the Great Depression. Prior to that time, the social problems of individuals and families were, for the most part, of concern only to those involved.

Social planning is, by definition, planning that tries to account for and deal with a community's social needs. Webster's Dictionary defines "social" as: "tending to form cooperative or inter-dependent relationships with one's fellows." Thus, social planning focuses on human problems that are not resolvable by individual action, but require help from others.

What social planning should include is, however, a controversial topic. At issue are the types of social needs appropriately of community concern, and the extent to which the community is responsible for resolving them. Our society's concept of what can and cannot be resolved individually is changing--for example, poverty, alcoholism, employment and housing are a few of the areas for which society now generally sees community responsibility.

Another controversial topic is the role of local community government in taking responsibility for social needs. Traditionally, smaller governmental units have tried to leave much of this work to volunteer and charity groups.

In the final analysis, the nature and content of the social needs a community will accept as civic responsibilities will be decided by the members of the community. These political decisions are and should be based on expressions of need by the community and review of community needs to determine the possible methods of resolution, the costs of resolution, etc. Thus, as with any other community decision, technical information as well as political sensitivity are needed.

Small cities beginning to deal with social planning in a more organized manner will find it helpful to have a fairly clear and concise list of areas of concern. Starting the process with such a list will help order efforts, focus attention, and avoid or clarify extended debate over the emotional issues frequently stimulated by discussion of social needs. A nationwide task force of United Way Agencies has developed such a checklist. It is obviously neither specific enough nor relevant enough to local concerns to be more than a generalized guide. However, it is useful as a beginning.

I ADEQUATE INCOME AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY: including employment, income maintenance and consumer protection

II OPTIMAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS FOR PROVISION OF BASIC MATERIAL NEEDS: food, nutrition, clothing, housing, transportation, safety, justice

III OPTIMAL HEALTH: public health, medical care, mental health, rehabilitation

IV ADEQUATE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS: education, libraries, special education

V OPTIMAL PERSONAL AND SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT AND DEVELOPMENT: family counseling and support, child care and family planning, crisis intervention, recreation, group and intergroup services, cultural and spiritual development services

VI ADEQUATELY ORGANIZED SOCIAL INSTRUMENTALITIES: community and political organization, human and economic development, administration, commun-

ication and research, and equal opportunity programs.[1]

Another way of viewing the content of social needs has been suggested by the psychologist Abraham Maslow, in his "hierarchy of needs." Maslow felt that the more fundamental human needs must be met before others further along the scale could be satisfied. Although questions of local priority are best left to local political processes, Maslow's hierarchy helps distinguish between survival, subsistance, developmental, and fulfillment needs.

Level 1	PHYSIOLOGICAL	Hunger, thirst, rest, shelter, protection from enemies
Level 2	SAFETY	Protection against danger, or threat of deprivation
Level 3	SOCIAL	Belonging, associations with others, friendship, love
Level 4	EGO	Self-confidence, recognition, appreciation, respect, status
Level 5	SELF-FULFILLMENT	Realization of one's potential, self-development, creativity, volunteering[2]

New Emphasis on Local Government

It seems clear that community governments, both large and small, are being held increasingly responsible for a growing range of social services--both by their constitutents and by the federal and state governments. The federal government's "New Federalism" programs seek to decentralize problem identification and resolution processes from the federal to state, regional, and local levels. Among the major pieces of New Federalism legislation affecting small communities are:

1. General Revenue Sharing, which reallocated federal tax revenues on a complex formula, slightly favoring impoverished communities, and allowing funding purposes to be determined locally.

2. Rural Development Act of 1972, aimed at improving planning and coordinated utilization of federal and state resources for rural areas.

3. Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, which consolidates HUD's categorical programs into a flexible block grant approach, with emphasis on concerns of physical development.

There are, additionally, a variety of federally funded programs providing social services in the community that are managed entirely by state agencies. One of the major tenets of "New Federalism" is an emphasis on comprehensive planning at all levels of government. This is complemented by state requirements for general plans. Such planning requires that participating communities develop a fairly sophisticated ability to gather widely varied data, as well as forecasting or predicting capacity. Social needs are included in most of these requirements, although not usually as an item of central concern. However, the often-mandated requirement for establishment and participation of citizens advisory boards may be a first step in social planning for some communities.

A second source of stimulus for increased social planning at the local level is citizen desire. Increasingly, the citizens of non-metropolitan communities

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1. United Way of America, United Way of America Services Identification System, Alexandria, 1972

2. Maslow, A., Motivation And Personality, Harper & Row, New York, 1970

feel that they deserve equal access to the broad range of social services offered in metropolitan areas. This feeling is given added emphasis by the increasing number of metropolitan residents moving to non-metropolitan communities, where, typically, they increase demands for improved social services--expecting a level comparable to the metropolitan areas they left. They also complicate local social issues by increasing population, adding pressure on services and industry, and by influencing many communities to attempt to avoid further population growth.

Given all of these considerations, to what extent are cities felt to be responsible for the resolution of social needs of their residents? The League of California Cities has published an action plan for civic social planning responsibilities. That plan states that:

"Each city should assume responsibility for identifying all community social needs, and for planning, coordinating, and evaluating programs to alleviate social problems within its boundaries. Cities should insure the delivery of all essential social services either by serving as an advocate or catalyst to insure the most effective delivery of service by the appropriate public and/or private agencies or by delivering such services themselves.

Each city should prepare and adopt a social services element to its general plan, treating it like the other general plan elements, and as part of the overall planning process. The social services element should be a plan for determining city goals and objectives and for establishing standards and priorities to meet community social needs. The social services element should address the needs of all city residents from the youngest to the oldest."[3]

Obviously, small cities and rural communities are faced with an immediate problem in relation to social planning--who shall do it? Small city staffs frequently are fully engaged in maintaining existing programs and have neither the time nor expertise to engage in new concerns.

The Problems of Planning

Most small cities have already found implementation of comprehensive planning processes to be beyond their immediate needs and capabilities. In these cases, there may only be three types of actions they can take (assuming they don't expect to have funds available to drastically increase staff). As one strategy, planning can be restricted to less sophisticated procedures dealing with only one or two areas of concern--leaving the range of needs and the procedural detail to evolve slowly over a period of years. Small, restrictively focused programs (e.g., health, or manpower only) done well initially with existing resources can lead to greater expertise, recognition, and possibly increased support for social programs. Additionally, it may be well to avoid initiating first efforts in problem areas severely complicated by political factors.

The second strategy for initiating a social planning effort with limited resources is to acquire resources and assistance from other agencies and groups. One obvious alternative is to purchase specific expertise on contract, but financial resources often preclude this possibility. In any case, certain types of assistance can be gained on a cooperative basis both locally and regionally. Local assistance may be gained from volunteer programs such as United Way organizations, human relations councils, etc. In some cases local community action agencies already exist and can assist social planning efforts. Local colleges and universities, including the University of California Cooperative Extension Service, should not be overlooked.

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3. League of California Cities, Action Plan for Social Responsibilities of Cities, in Handbook For Planning And Managing Community Development, 1108 "O" St., Sacramento, CA.

County government can usually supply some expertise and can cooperate in programs ranging from welfare, health, and education to planning expertise and assistance. Additionally, county agencies can often provide planners with much needed information, statistics, and other data. The state government can assist in many of the same ways, in addition to the social services programs it provides directly. Finally, Councils of Governments (CoGS) and Regional Planning Agencies can and do provide planning expertise, assistance, and information.

The third strategy for social planning in small cities centers on the development of cooperative planning programs rather than individual city or community plans. In many cases, and certainly in the case of the smallest cities (pop. 5,000 or less), it is not feasible to attempt to develop a separate plan at all. In such cases, small communities should seek to identify and prioritize their needs as best they can and then seek to have input into joint social (as well as other) planning efforts including elements of county general plans. Such joint efforts may be carried out in cooperation with the county government, with a regional consortium representing several small communities, or both.

Common Social Planning Procedures

There are three basic social planning techniques, all aimed at identifying social needs:

Social indicators, or statistical indicators, are widely used to determine and prioritize social needs. The procedure centers on the collection of statistics relevant to selected social concerns (e.g., unemployment data, divorce rates, arrest numbers, etc.). Such statistics can be useful indicators of social problems and their severity in relation to other, similar communities. However, statistical indicators alone can be very deceptive and great care should be used to ensure that other factors are not involved. For example, crime figures may reflect differences in crime reporting or detection rather than a real difference in numbers of crimes.

Professional social service workers' judgments also are a commonly used method of identifying, prioritizing and planning for social needs. Competent practitioners can often make more insightful perceptions of the nature of social problems than is possible with other methods, and they usually include some recommendations for action. However, such professionals usually can only review those social concerns relating directly to their area of work and their subjective judgments may well reflect much of their own values as distinct from community values.

The third approach is to contact the community's residents directly for their assessment of social needs and priorities. The methods may vary from informal community meetings to interviews or questionnaires. This approach benefits from personal perceptions based on familiarity and reflects public political concerns. However, it can be expensive, time-consuming, and may give results biased by the process itself, (e.g., survey questions may not consider all options, or meetings may be dominated by some interests, etc.).

The small community may find that methods two and three best serve their needs. Planners usually recommend that some combination of all three be used, if possible, to cross-check eachother.

In order to put this information in better perspective for small communities, brief profiles of three small cities' approaches to social planning are presented below. The varying goals and procedures illustrate how differing small cities can initiate social planning efforts.

City of Arcata
Population: 11,950
Humbolt County
Wayne Goldberg, Planning Director

Social Planning Concern: Arcata's working focus of social planning is to:
A. improve social services delivery to public
B. improve physical designs to better meet public's social needs
Their primary concern is to determine the effect physical design (buildings, traffic, zoning, settings, etc.) has on social needs and interactions...then to develop a design manual which would, in effect, become an element in their general plan.

Reasons for Initiation: After reviewing general plan requirements, the planning staff received feedback from the state legislature leading them to suspect that social planning elements would become mandatory eventually and so wanted to build it in from the beginning.

Also, consistent public feedback that analysis and coordination of social services was needed. Finally, the planning staff theorized that physical design could reinforce or inhibit certain social behaviors. In this case a high crime rate in a newly designed low-income housing project.

Responsibility for Social Planning: The city planning department assumes responsibility for all city planning, including social. In actuality, the planning director is the only staff member directly involved. The planning staff drew up and secured HUD 701 funding (no longer available for this purpose) for a proposal to subcontract a survey of community social needs and an attempt to identify physical design factors which might have direct effect.

Consequently, the actual work in this case is being carried out by consulting agencies. These agencies will produce the design manual which will hopefully become the social element in the general plan.

Needs and opportunities uncovered via the public survey work relevant to social services are being reported to a volunteer Human Services Coordinating Council. Regular reports are also made to the city council, however, the planning staff assumes no responsibility for creation or coordination of social service programs.

Social Planning Program: The project is divided into two phases. The total budget is about $27,000 and considered underbudgeted by all involved. Phase I is budgeted at about $11,000 and Phase II at about $16,000. Phase I was a needs assessment survey conducted by personnel from a local state university. Action on the development or coordination, alteration etc., of social service programs as a result of this survey is expected, primarily from the county's Human Services Coordinating Council. Results have also been given the city council and to the public via hearings.

Phase II consists of a follow-up questionnaire which seeks to determine if and how the social needs

expressed in the assessment survey relate to physical design factors. This phase is being conducted by a professional planning consultant agency. Using the results of this follow-up questionnaire (also distributed as were the survey results) the contractor will prepare a manual for physical design and development giving model concepts and specific ideas to increase social interaction and reduce opportunities for anti-social behavior.

Cooperating Groups:

A. Planning Director is only staff member directly involved in the program.
B. Human Services Coordinating Council is a volunteer effort and depends on the cooperation of member agencies and organizations.
C. Public involvement has been via the surveys and questionnaires only (1,100 households) and the public hearings on the design manual and findings.
D. Interest groups - none have been really involved or have brought their focused concerns to bear as yet.

Consequences of Involvement: As of now the planning director sees three major possible consequences:

A. Public expectations for the improvement of improved social services can easily be built beyond the realistic likelihood of satisfaction.
B. Improvement in social services delivery by the involved agencies as a result of survey results.
C. Long term improvement in social situation and needs as a result of housing and other design improvements.

Things Arcata would have liked to have known sooner:

A. More accurate estimates of costs involved, or at least they wish they had overbudgeted their early figures.
B. A better idea of the magnitude of political and popular impact of their surveys earlier. Public comment has been heavy, as have been specific requests for aid putting unexpected pressure on city staff and officials.

Yuba City
Population: 15,000
Sutter County
Peter Harvey, City Administrator

Social Planning Concern: Yuba City's project is not aimed at any specific social concerns as yet. Rather, a broad range of data is being gathered as the initial phase of an overall comprehensive planning effort. Their primary desire is to use community development processes to determine residents' feelings and desires about physical and social concerns. A social element is projected to be included in the resulting general plan and will be concerned with social services and social services delivery.

Reasons for Initiation: After reviewing Housing and Community Development planning requirements, a design was determined for a comprehensive general plan that would include a social element. Secondarily, the city government is interested in developing a style of administration modeled after public marketing strategies.

Responsibility for Social Planning: The City Planning Department has responsibility for all city planning. This project, known as "Project '76" is being coordinated with Sacramento Regional Area Planning Commission and the City Administrator's office which will supervise a program of public meetings and interest/service group meetings. Much of the initial survey work was supervised by researchers from the University of California at Davis' Community Studies and Development Research Group. The project is funded by city government (approximately $1,000), a SRAPC technical assistance grant (approximately $1,500), and UCD, computer, and other research time (approximately $3,000).

The Planning Program: In accordance with their use of the public marketing approach, the planning program is based on acquiring extensive community resident input for analysis and later prioritization by the community. The initial phase consisted of 70 interviews of representative residents by UCD research assistants from which a 26 item questionnaire was derived. This questionnaire was sent to 2,000 representative households and returns were encouraged by TV, radio and newspaper coverage of the program. Survey results are being anaylzed via UCD computers and a resultant community profile will be formulated. This profile will be issued in brochure form, including history, community services status, needs, etc. SRAPC is preparing the profile brochures, which will be distributed along with slide presentations and talks at scheduled public meetings and meetings with community groups. Staff from the City Administrator's office will supervise this phase. Steering committees representing various community interests will then be formed to develop goals for action together with city staff.

Cooperating Groups:

A. City Planning department staff and City Administrators staff are supervising the program
B. Sacramento Regional Area Planning Commission has provided data, advice, technical assistance, and funds
C. U.C.D. Community Studies and Development Research Group has provided data and technical assistance
D. Public involvement is obtained via interview, survey, mass media reporting, public and community group meetings, and public steering committees.

Consequences of Involvement: Consequences are not really known since only the survey portion of the project is complete to date. Care will be taken to clearly articulate fiscal ramifications and fiscal trade-offs all during the process and this may help avoid raising public expectations for new services beyond realistic likelihoods.

Advice for Others Considering This Method: Yuba City is generally well pleased with this effort, so far. The only caution to be passed on would be to carefully pretest questionnaires before running the survey, since wording of questions can distort results.

Yuba City staff feel that other small cities desiring to follow this model could do so somewhat more cheaply and easily, especially if they can cooperate with SRAPC and the UCD group directly or via similar institutions in their area.

City of Davis
Population: 31,000
Yolo County
Gloria McGregor, Community Development Director, City of Davis
Carol Ballesteros, Associate Socio-economic Planner, SRAPC
Lois Scott, Associate Planner, Davis Community Development Department

Social Planning Concern: Davis' focus is to:

A. Develop a Quality of Life element to the General Plan
B. Develop a Community Services plan, detailing implementation strategies.

Their primary concerns are to evaluate the current delivery of social services, identify areas of need not now served, and to provide for better coordinated Social Services delivery.

Reasons For Initiation: Davis has for some time provided a comparatively high level of Social Services programs which generated a concern for determining the priority areas for city support and for exploring the City's role in social needs areas. The City Community Services Commission had been relaying residents' feelings, expressions of need, etc., to the city council and attempting to plan social services. Frustrations arising from this indirect means of dealing with social concerns added to administrators' interest in comprehensive and systematic planning led to the project's conception. The project was initiated by the Life Enrichment Programs Department. Davis has a long history of a high degree of resident involvement in public affairs which should also be recognized as an initiating force.

Responsibility For Social Planning: The Community Services Commission, a permanent advisory body to the city council, is responsible for overseeing the project and for recommending its adoption by the council. The City Planning Commission is responsible for reviewing the element for consistancy with the General Plan and established policies.

The Community Services Commission has established a consortium, an ad hoc group consisting of representatives from social service agencies, community groups, and governmental organizations. This group is responsible for the actual direction, review, and coordination of the project. It has formed seven task forces for specific concerns. The consortium as a whole, and each task force, has paid city staff coordinating.

Social Planning Program: Essentially, Davis has expanded the concept of a social services element to a general plan, to what is termed a Quality of Life Element, which is seen as having a broader, more liberal scope. The Sacramento Regional Area Planning Commission (SRAPC) awarded the effort a $9,000 Technical Assistance Grant which was matched with $2,250 cash and $2,250 in-kind support by the city council.

The seven task forces, involving about 15 persons each are:

1. Health Care
2. Mental Health
3. Life Enrichment (recreation, education, etc.)
4. Income Maintenance
5. Children's Needs
6. Transportation
7. Judicial System

Their charge is to:

1. Define the scope of their area of concern
   a. Priorities determined by,
      --number of people affected
      --urgency or severity of need
      --resources availab

2. Collect information needed to support study
3. Suggest goals and policies
4. Make recommendations for action
5. Solicit public participation whenever possible

The grant was awarded in August 1975 and the Quality of Life element is to be completed in July 1976. Surveys designed by SRAPC have been administered to community residents by the task forces. Both task force and consortium meetings are open to the public and well announced. The resulting element will be drafted by the consortium, reviewed by the Planning Commission, reviewed at open hearings by the Community Services Commission, and submitted to the City Council for approval. The element is hoped to include or be based on evaluations of social services delivery, social needs assessments, community resources inventory, suggested social services policy guidelines, and recommendations for action. It is expected that the city may need another year to set priorities and complete practical plans for better integrating existing social services delivery to reduce overlap, and to arrange for provision of new, needed services.

Cooperating Groups:

A. Davis Life Enrichment Department - coordinating staff
B. Davis Community Development Department - staff
C. SRAPC - technical assistance, financial support
D. Yolo County Government - information, technical assistance
E. Community and Service Agencies - information, cooperation and participation on task forces
F. Civic Commissions - technical assistance, information
G. Residents - information, cooperation and participation on task forces, consortium meetings, and public hearings
H. Interest Groups - information, cooperation and participation on task forces, consortium meetings, and public hearings.

Consequences of Involvement: As the task force planning phase comes to a close the staff has several observations:

A. There seems, so far, to be fairly general agreement that not many new services are needed, rather increased effort is needed to coordinate existing services originating from various sources and to undertake a major public education program as to services existance and source. There is also indication of strong need for an effective information and referral service.

B. This project has so far had extensive public interest and resident involvement. The involvement of such large numbers of individuals considerably slows progress at this early planning phase and is frustrating to administrators staff. However, there are indications that large segments of the populace have received a basic education in the realities of social services provision and are now advocates in favor of a plan they feel they have a personal stake in. Staff believe this will add to their rate of progress in application and to the effectiveness of their actions.

C. Davis has a history of extensive resident interest and involvement which may not be readily duplicable by other communities, except possibly the smallest.

Staff point out that though much of the work was designed by professionals, community residents have revised it and implemented it themselves.

D. Davis has learned much about the role of city government in supervising and supplying social services from this effort. There is expectation now that the original goals of ensuring efficient and effective investment of civic resources and discretionary funds from other sources (e.g. revenue sharing) going to support social services and programs, will be well served.

Things Davis Would Have Liked to Have Known Sooner:

A. This project has required much more staff effort and time and financial expense than was originally estimated. Staff feel that extensive resident involvement is responsible for much of the increase in staff time required over that estimated.

B. A consortium of the type used in this project appears to be a much more difficult entity to maintain effectively because it sits between a major civic commission and community task forces. As a result, it faces complex relationships with both groups and is not easily seen as a priority committment by busy administrators or participants.

Sources of Help

League of California Cities
1108 "O" Street
Sacramento, California 95814

State of California
Dept. of Housing & Community Development
1807 13th St.
Sacramento, California 95814

Central Sierra Planning Council
5[illegible] North Main St., Room 18
P.O. Box 816
Altaville, California 95221

Association of Bay Area Governments
Hotel Claremont
Berkeley, California 94705

Humboldt County Assoc. of Governments
P.O. Box 1018
Eureka, California 95501

Kings County Regional Planning Agency
Courthouse, Box C
Hanford, California 93230

Southern California Association of Governments
600 S. Commonwealth Avenue, Suite 1000
Los Angeles, California 90005

Stanislaus Area Association of Governments
814 14th St.
Modesto, California 95354

Butte County Association of Governments
1859 Bird St.
Oroville, California 95965

Sacramento Regional Area Planning Commission
1225 Eighth St., Suite 400
Sacramento, California 95814

San Luis Obispo County and Cities Area Planning Coordinating Council
1051 Mill Street
San Luis Obispo, California 93401

Tahoe Regional Planning Agency
P.O. Box 8896
South Lake Tahoe, California 95731

County Supervisors Association of CA.
Suite 201, 11th and L Building
Sacramento, California 95814

Cooperative Extension
Assistant Director of Rural & Community Resource Development
Edward J. Blakely
228 Mrak Hall
University of California, Davis, CA. 95616

Kern County Council of Governments
1106 26th St.
Bakersfield, California 93301

Inyo Mono Association of Government Entities
P.O. Box 8
Bridgeport, California 93517

Council of Fresno County Governments
104 Tulare St., Suite 520
Fresno, California 93721

Lake County-City Areawide Planning Commission
Lake County Courthouse
Lakeport, California 95453

Merced County Association of Governments
P.O. Box 2201
Merced, California 95340

Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments
P. O. Box 190
Monterey, California 93940

Shasta County and Cities Area Planning Council
1855 Placer St., Room 102
Redding, California 96001

Comprehensive Planning Organization of the San Diego Region
Suite 524, Security Pacific Plaza
1200 Third Avenue
San Diego, California 92101

Santa Barbara County-Cities Area Planning Council
1306 Santa Barbara Street
Santa Barbara, California 93101

San Joaquin County Council of Governments
1850 E. Hazelton
Stockton, California 95205

Mendocino County-Cities Planning Council
Room 110, Courthouse
Ukiah, California 94482

Tri-County Area Planning Council
c/o Glenn County Planning Department
525 West Sycamore Street
Willows, California 95988

Tulare County Association of Governments
Room 107, Courthouse
Visalia, California 93277

Siskiyou Association of Govermental Entities
County Courthouse
Yreka, California 96097